

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 EUR-25 AF-10 IO-12 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-09 H-02 INR-09 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01

PRS-01 SS-14 USIA-12 ACDA-19 AID-20 OMB-01 T-03 IGA-02

RSR-01 /170 W

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R 161332 Z MAR 73

FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7672

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

USINT CAIRO

USMISSION USUN

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 2058

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PBOR, IS, JO

SUBJECT: PROPOSED CONVERSION OF TEMPORARY ISRAELI SETTLEMENT ON WEST BANK INFO PERMANENT ONE

1. PRESS REPORTED MARCH 13 THAT CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF AHDUT AVODAH' S KIBBUTZ MOVEMENT HAS DECIDED TO CONVERT NAHAL GILGAL IN JORDAN VALLEY TO CIVILIAN KIBBUTZ IN MAY, 1973. ARTICLE ALSO SAID COMMITTEE DECIDED TO CONVERT FURTHER SETTLEMENT IN JORDAN VALLEY, WHICH WOULD PROBABLY BE NAHAL NAARAN. IT CONTINUED THAT MOVEMENT' S APPROVAL OF NAHAL GILGAL CONVERSION IS RESULT OF DECISION TAKEN BY MOVEMENT IN OCTOBER 1967, AND IT REPRESENTS NO CHANGE IN POLICY OF PROVIDING EXTRA BENEFITS TO SETTLEMENTS IN NEW AREAS WHICH ARE MADE TO STRENGTHEN SECURITY OF ISRAEL AND ENSURE DEFENSIBLE BORDERS, WITHIN FRAMEWORK OF GOVERNMENT DECISIONS TOWARD THIS OBJECTIVE.

2. SPOKESMAN FOR SETTLEMENT DEPARTMENT OF JEWISH AGENCY TOLD EMBOFF THAT COMMITTEE DISCUSSED CONVERSION OF ONE NAHAL IN JORDAN VALLEY TO CIVILIAN STATUS. BOTH NAHAL GILGAL AND NAHAL NAARAN WERE CONSIDERED, WITH MOVEMENT DECISION GOING TO GILGAL. SPOKESMAN STRESSED THAT JEWISH AGENCY (WHICH
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ALSO MUST APPROVE) HAS MADE NO DECISION TO EFFECT CONVERSION.
AGENCY FEELS NAHAL GILGAL IS NOT YET ECONOMICALLY STABLE
ENOUGH FOR CONVERSION TO CIVILIAN SETTLEMENT.

3. EMBASSY BELIEVES, HOWEVER, THAT QUESTION OF ECONOMICS IS
LARGELY ACADEMIC, SINCE NEW KIBBUTZIM USUALLY REQUIRE HEAVY SUBSIDY
FOR INITIAL YEARS OF OPERATION. NAHAL GILGAL IS LOCATED IN RELA-
TIVELY FERTILE VALLEY WHERE EXTENSIVE LAND IS UNDER CULTIVATION,
AND IT WOULD APPEAR TO HAVE A MUCH BETTER CHANCE OF PROSPERING
THAN NAHAL NAARAN, WHICH IS LOCATED IN A BARRAN PLAIN AND SEEMS
LIKELY TO REMAIN A MILITARY OUTPOST, FOR TIME BEING.

4. COMMENT. CONVERSION OF GILGAL, WHICH WE EXPECT
WILL GO THROUGH ABOUT MJAHTHIS YEAR, WILL RAISE NUMBER OF PERMANENT
ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS IN WEST BANK FROMSEVEN TO EIGHT. IT IS FIRST
SUCH CONVERSION IN MANY MONTHS, BUT WE WOULD NOT BE SURPRISED TO
SEE TEMPO OF ISRAELI SETTLING IN WEST BANK PICK UP IN NEAR FUTURE,
PARTLY BECAUSE THIS IS ISRAELI ELECTION YEAR, AND SUCH ACTIONS ARE
POPULAR.
ZURHELLEN

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*** Current Classification *** CONFIDENTIAL

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